

VICTORIA CHORAL UNION.

ORGANIZED 1896.

THIRD SEASON. SPECIAL CONCERT.
(By Request.)

THE ROSE MAIDEN

CANTATA BY FREDERIC H. COWEN,

AT INSTITUTE HALL, VIEW STREET,

WEDNESDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 22ND, 1899.

SOLOISTS:

Soprano—MISS S. MCNIFFE. **Alto**—MRS. J. D. HELMCKEN.
Tenors—MR. H. J. CAVE AND MR. J. KINGHAM. **Baritone**—MR. W. S. GOODWIN.
Base—MR. W. H. BARTON.

ORCHESTRA:

1st Violins—DR. NASH, MISS YOUNG, MR. B. BANTLEY, MR. C. E. LOMBARD.
2nd Violins—MAJOR TROTTER, MR. E. A. POWELL, MR. R. B. POWELL.
Violas—MR. J. LONGFIELD, MRS. FOOT.
Violoncellos—MR. A. LONGFIELD, MR. A. PARFITT.
Contrabasso—MR. C. G. HITT.
Clarionets—MR. E. MURSET, MR. S. D. SCHULTZ. **Flutes**—MR. F. W. MORSE, MR. H. KENT.
Cornet—MR. W. DUCK. **Horn**—MR. GEO. JAY, JR.
Tympani—MR. C. A. LOMBARD. **Piano**—MR. E. H. RUSSELL.

CONDUCTOR, - - MR. WM. GREIG.

THE ROSE MAIDEN.

—ARGUMENT.—

The Queen of the Flower Fairies, weary of a life of unbroken calm, prays of the newly returned Spring that he will bestow upon her also the gift of love that he bestows upon man. He warns her of the risk she runs, but finally yields to her entreaties by changing her while she sleeps, into the form of a beautiful girl. Under the name of Roseblossom, she wanders through the world to find the love that she seeks, and meets with a girl who, having been betrayed and deserted by her lover, loses her senses and dies broken-hearted. But, undeterred from her search, Roseblossom becomes the wife of a forester, with whom she lives for a time in such perfect happiness that she cannot survive his death. The elves bewail the fate of their Queen, and curse love as fatal to peace and happiness.

INTRODUCTION (*Instrumental.*)

CHORUS.

Green vale and vineclad mountain
Lie locked in snowy sleep:
No lark is skyward singing,
And all the world doth weep,
Still do great clouds of darkness
Float o'er the silent land,
Like forms of phantom giants,
That wander hand in hand.

RECIT. (*Tenor.*)

And through Earth's bridal chamber
A whisper murmurs by—

RECIT. (*Soprano.*)

ROSEBLOSSOM.—Oh! hear, thou king of beauty
The sadness of my sigh!
Though Summer comes in glory,
In winter must I pine,
Whose soul is filled with longing
For greater bliss than thine!

RECIT. (*Baritone.*)

THE SPRING.—Nay—why should all my gladness
For thee alone be pain?
'Tis to make red the Roses
That Spring will bloom again.

DUET (*Soprano and Baritone.*)

SOPRANO.

ROSEBLOSSOM.—But hear me!—
The Rose by God in Eden
First planted from above,
And n'er from earth departed—
That heavenly Rose is love!
My heart will break with longing;
Oh! let me live, and rove
Through all the world to find it—
That perfect Rose of Love!

BARITONE.

THE SPRING.—But hast thou then forgotten,
Thou, who a Rose art born,
That 'tis the fairest Roses
That have the sharpest thorn!
That fount thou fain would'st drink of
Ne'er pure on Earth appears,
Whose sweetness must be mingled
With bitterness of tears.

SOPRANO.

ROSEBLOSSOM.—Yet give me of those waters;
I thirst, I burn to prove
The sweetness that is mingled
With bitterness of Love.

RECIT. (*Baritone.*)

THE SPRING.—Lose then the peace for ever
That Love may never know;
Be thine a life of sorrow,
Since thou will have it so.

DUET (*Soprano and Baritone.*)

THE SPRING.—Soon as the mountain summits
Are golden in the west,
The Rose of dawn shall kiss thee
And wake thee to thy quest.

ROSEBLOSSOM.—Soon, soon, ye mountain summits
Be golden in the west!
Haste, Rose of dawn, to kiss me
And wake me to my quest.

RECIT. (*Tenor.*)

So spake the Spring; and, as he spake,
Touched with his breath her bending head;
And ere the dawn began to break,
Her soul in silence fled.

CHORUS.

A maid more beautiful than May,
She slept upon the forest strand—

Fair as an angel's self she lay,
Holding a rosebud in her hand.
The rose-red mist of morning broke
O'er the grey vale,—and she awoke.

SOLO (*Soprano.*)

ROSEBLOSSOM.—Bloom on, bloom on my Roses,
More brightly than before ;
For unto you, my Roses,
Return I nevermore.
I go the Rose to gather
Whose fragrance fills the skies ;
That sleeps not e'en in Winter,
Nor dies when summer dies.

CHORUS.

'Mid the waving rose-trees,
By their breath caressed,
Waits the Gard'ner's daughter
Him she loves the best.
For the sun is sinking
Nightward in the west,
And the bells of even
Call the world to rest.
But, alas ! thou waitest,
For his step in vain—
For his voice who never
Seeks thy bower again.
False the love he uttered
To thy trusting ears,
And the vows he made thee
Now another hears.

RECIT. (*Soprano.*)

ROSEBLOSSOM.—God greet thee, fairest maiden—
God greet thee, sister mine ;
Why are thy eyes cast downward,
Nor smile those lips of thine ?

RECIT. (*Contralto.*)

THE GARDENER'S DAUGHTER—
Ask of yon ruined castle—
Ask of yon withered tree—
Ask of yon dying blossom,
And they will speak of me !
Welcome !—
See, my love, how crowned with brightness
Is our bed of bridal whiteness !
Bridal wreaths they scatter o'er us
Bridal garlands strew before us.
In the moonbeams, fair and fine—
Hear'st thou not, thou soul of mine,
How from heavenward borne along,
Bridal chimes around us throng
Filling us with song ?

SOLO (*Contralto.*)

Yet chime they so sadly,
So harshly they ring—
Oh ! say, my beloved,
What song do they sing ?
Hold me hard to thy bosom—
What makes it so cold !

What form does my vision
In terror behold ?
It grasps me, it rends me
From thee, my soul's breath—

RECIT (*Tenor.*)

'Tis thine, O Love, that, ere they blossom,
Gives Roses unto Death !

CHORUS.

O earthborn sorrow,
That is not ours,
Who dwell in the peace
Of the land of flowers !
Like the buds of Spring,
Like the summer grass,
Like the Autumn leaves
That in Winter pass,
So fadeth away
Man's fragrant May—
So cometh night
Ere he grasps the day.

TRIO.

Hast thou wandered in the forest,
In its depths so green and still ?
Hast thou listened to the music
Of the leaf and of the rill ?
Hast thou wandered in the forest
When the Sun's first gladness shines
And the purple light of morning
Sets aglow the towering pines ?
If thou hast aright beholden
All the glory of the trees—
If thy soul has rightly gathered
All their wondrous harmonies—
In the shadow of the forest
Shall thy bitter longing cease,
And thy heart shall weep no longer,
And thy spirit shall have peace.

AIR (*Tenor.*)

The sleep of even
Folds field and cot ;
Roseblossom only
Is sleeping not.
From out her chamber
She gazes still,
With looks of longing
O'er field and hill.
Now knows she the meaning
Of the dreams that were born,
When deep in the forest
She wandered at morn ;
That the kiss of an angel
Had come to remove
The veil from her spirit,
And taught it to love.
And e'en as with longing
She looked through the dim
Soft silence of midnight
That speaks but of him.

RECIT. (*Baritone.*)

Hark ! beneath her window
Raises up her voice,
With the joy of Springtime
Making her rejoice.

DUET (*Soprano and Tenor.*)

THE FORESTER.—I know a rosebud shining
More than all other roses shine ;
Ah ! how I long to reach it,
How fain would I beseech it,
To be for ever mine !
But when I seek to tell it
How fair I hold it and how dear,
So doth its beauty fill me,
So doth its sweetness thrill me,
I cannot speak for fear.
Oh ! let that wealth of sweetness
That fills that gentle heart of thine
Sweet Rosebud, fill thy bosom
With Love's own bud and blossom,
And let it all be mine !

SOPRANO.

ROSEBLOSSOM.—Good night, thou sweetest singer—
Good night until the sun shall shine,
Ah ! speak of thy love and fear not,
That she will frown and hear not
Who even now is thine !

CHORUS.

'Tis thy wedding morning
Shining in the skies,
Bridal bells are ringing,
Bridal songs arise,
Opening the portals
Of thy Paradise.
'Tis the last fair morning
For thy maiden eyes—
'Tis thy marriage morning—
Rise, sweet maid, arise !

SOLO (*Baritone.*)

Where gloomy pine-trees rustle,
And slender larches stir,
Where spread their heavy plumage,
The cedar and the fir,
There, on the forest's margin,
The ranger's cottage stood,
And looked across the valley
Down from the dark green wood.
Among the pine-trees madly
The wild north wind may rush,
And scatter cones and branches
And rave through brake and bush.
But though o'er hill and valley
The winds of Winter storm,
Still fast within that cottage
Stays Summer's radiant form.

RECIT. (*Tenor.*)

For from the Summer's blossom
That crowned the bridal day,
No breath of bloom hath faded,
No fragrance passed away.
Alas, that dreams of gladness
Must pass ere pass the years,
That peace, and joy, and laughter,
The heralds are of tears.
At morn he sought the forest,
And ere the day was done,
His comrades bore him homeward,
Slain by an outlaw's gun.
Tearless she gazed upon him,
And, through the night and day,
Tearless she kept her vigil,
Till he was borne away.
Through weary months of Winter,
She only woke to weep.
And when returned the swallows,
She too had fall'n asleep.

CHORUS (*Male Voices.*)

What sounds there so softly
Through bush and through brake?
What leaps there so lightly?
The elves are awake !
The sun is their summons
To blossom anew ;
On the bed of their sister
Green garlands they strew,
White boughs of the hawthorn
They bend o'er her head,
To shield from the sunshine
The sleep of the dead.

CHORUS OF ELVES.

Farewell ! sleep thou lightly,
Fair queen of the flowers,
Though lost to the peace
That was thine, and is ours !
Sleep well, though the meadow
Is golden once more,
Though the lark loud is telling
That Winter is o'er.
We flee from love's gladness,
We shrink from his breath
Whose joy ends in sorrow,
Whose triumph is death !

SOLO (*Tenor and Chorus.*)

Yea ! e'en as die the roses,
Must die the truest heart,
They that rejoice must sorrow,
And they that love must part.
But yet, O God, we praise Thee
Who blendest night and morn,
Too lovely were Thy roses,
Were they without a thorn.